

CLAIMS APPENDIX
(current wording of all pending claims)

1. (four times amended) A method of roasting coffee beans comprising the steps of establishing the degree to which the coffee beans must be roasted to attain a desired aroma; generating a measurable first parameter which is indicative that the coffee beans have been sufficiently roasted to yield the desired aroma; storing the first parameter; roasting fresh coffee beans at a roasting temperature by flowing heated air over the fresh coffee beans; filtering substantially all pollutants from the heated air following the roasting step, including flowing the heated air through a catalytic converter; thereafter reheating and recirculating a relatively major portion of the substantially pollutant-free air over the fresh coffee beans to thereby continue roasting; discharging a relatively minor portion of the filtered air while reheating and recirculating the relatively major portion of the air for further use during roasting; monitoring a second parameter which is compatible with the first parameter and is generated by the fresh coffee beans during roasting; and, upon detecting a match between the first and second parameters, discontinuing the roasting step.

2. A method according to claim 1 wherein the first parameter is one of the color and darkness of the coffee beans and the second parameter is one of the color and darkness of the fresh coffee beans during roasting.

3. A method according to claim 2 including adjusting the step of discontinuing the roasting of the fresh coffee beans as a function of at least one of the roasting temperature and atmospheric pressure.

4. A method according to claim 1 wherein the step of monitoring comprises making a spectral analysis of the fresh coffee beans during the roasting step.

5. A method according to claim 4 wherein the step of making a spectral analysis comprises directing a laser beam onto the fresh coffee beans during the roasting step.

6. A method according to claim 5 wherein the laser beam has a wavelength in the range of between about 600 to 800 nm.

7. A method according to claim 1 including the steps of providing a multiplicity of different coffee bean types, establishing and storing the first parameter for each coffee bean type, prior to the roasting step selecting one of the multiplicity of coffee bean types for roasting; and wherein the step of discontinuing is carried out when there is a match between the first parameter for the selected coffee bean type and the second parameter.

8. A method according to claim 7 including the step of establishing a plurality of first parameters for at least one of the multiplicity of coffee bean types, each of which defines a different degree to which the coffee beans must be roasted to attain correspondingly differing desired aromas; prior to the roasting step selecting one of the plurality of first parameters for the at least one coffee bean type; and wherein the step of discontinuing is performed when the second parameter matches the selected one of the first parameters.

9. A method according to claim 1 wherein the roasting step comprises flowing heated air over the fresh coffee beans, and including the steps of removing substantially all pollutants from the air downstream of the fresh coffee beans being heated, cooling the air downstream of the fresh coffee beans to substantially room temperature, and thereafter exhausting the cooled air into a room of a building.

11. (four times amended) A method of automatically roasting coffee beans to attain a predetermined, desired coffee aroma comprising the steps of roasting a sample of the beans to a degree at which coffee made with the beans exhibits the desired aroma; sensing one of a color and a darkness of the beans when the beans have reached the degree of roasting and from the sensed color or darkness generating a first parameter which is indicative of the sensed color or darkness of the bean sample; storing the first parameter; thereafter roasting a batch of more than one pound of fresh beans by flowing heated air over the fresh beans; cleaning the heated air after it has passed the fresh beans so that the air is substantially pollutant-free by flowing it through a filtration system including a catalytic converter; cooling the air after the air has passed the fresh beans to about room temperature while continuing flowing the heated air over the fresh beans; discharging the cooled, pollutant-free, room temperature air into a substantially closed room frequented by humans; monitoring one of the color and darkness of

the fresh beans being roasted and generating a second parameter which is indicative of a color or darkness of the fresh beans; comparing the first and second parameters during roasting of the fresh beans; and terminating the roasting of the fresh beans when the first and second parameters match.

56. (five times amended) A method for uniformly roasting coffee beans at a plurality of geographically separate locations comprising placing a roasting machine at each location inside an enclosed room frequented by humans; equipping each roasting machine with a roasting container for holding fresh beans while the beans are being roasted, a hot air supply for heating the fresh beans to a roasting temperature, and an air removal system for directing used air away from the container; removing from the used air substantially all debris, smoke, oil, and other pollutants in a filtration system including a catalytic converter; after the step of removing, cooling at least a portion of the used air and recirculating any remaining portion of the cooled air to the hot air supply; discharging the at least a portion of used air in its entirety into the enclosed room while continuing heating the fresh beans; directing a laser light beam of a frequency in the range of between about 600-800 nm onto the beans in the container during roasting; generating an output signal from laser light reflected by the beans which is a function of the observed darkness of the beans; providing each roasting machine with a computer including a memory; feeding the output signal to the computer; at a central control station determining an optimal darkness for each bean type that will be roasted by the roasting machines; at the control station generating a control signal which reflects the optimal darkness of each roasted bean type; downloading the control signal from the central control station to the computer of each roasting machine; during roasting at any given roasting machine comparing the control signal stored in the associated memory with the output signal generated by the instrument; when the compared signals match, generating a command signal; and using the command signal to terminate the roasting of the beans in the container.

57. A method according to claim 56 including the steps of keeping an inventory of fresh beans proximate each roasting machine; monitoring the size of the fresh bean inventory; generating a low-inventory signal when the fresh bean inventory drops below a predetermined level; transmitting the inventory control signal to the central control station; and

transferring additional fresh beans to the roasting machine which generated the low-inventory signal upon receipt thereof at the control station.

58. A method according to claim 56 wherein each roasting machine has a plurality of different fresh bean types which can be roasted; and including the steps of generating an optimal darkness signal for each bean type at the control station; downloading each darkness signal to the computers of the roasting machines of the system; and, during roasting at any given one of the roasting machines, comparing the output signal from the instrument with the stored darkness signal which corresponds to the bean type being roasted in the container.

62. (twice amended) A method of roasting coffee beans comprising the steps of establishing the degree to which the coffee beans must be roasted to attain a desired aroma; generating a measurable first parameter which is indicative that the coffee beans have been sufficiently roasted to yield the desired aroma; storing the first parameter; roasting a batch of more than one pound of fresh coffee beans at a roasting temperature by flowing heated air over the fresh coffee beans; while flowing heated air over the fresh coffee beans removing substantially all pollutants from the air downstream of the fresh coffee beans being heated in a filtration system including a catalytic converter, cooling at least a portion of the air downstream of the fresh coffee beans to substantially room temperature, and thereafter, while continuing to flow heated air over the fresh coffee beans, exhausting the cooled air directly into a room of a building without recirculating any part of the cooled air into the filtration system; monitoring a second parameter which is compatible with the first parameter and is generated by the fresh coffee beans during roasting; and, upon detecting a match between the first and second parameters, discontinuing the roasting step.

63. A method according to claim 62 wherein the first parameter is one of the color and darkness of the coffee beans and the second parameter is one of the color and darkness of the fresh coffee beans during the roasting step.

64. A method according to claim 62 including adjusting the step of discontinuing the roasting of the fresh coffee beans as a function of at least one of the roasting temperature and atmospheric pressure.

65. A method according to claim 62 wherein the step of monitoring comprises making a spectral analysis of the fresh coffee beans during the roasting step.

66. A method according to claim 65 wherein the step of making a spectral analysis comprises directing a laser beam onto the fresh coffee beans during the roasting step.

67. A method according to claim 66 wherein the laser beam has a wavelength in the range of between about 600 to 800 nm.

68. A method according to claim 62 including the steps of providing a multiplicity of different coffee bean types, establishing and storing the first parameter for each coffee bean type, prior to the roasting step selecting one of the multiplicity of coffee bean types for roasting; and wherein the step of discontinuing is carried out when there is a match between the first parameter for the selected coffee bean type and the second parameter.

69. A method according to claim 68 including the step of establishing a plurality of first parameters for at least one of the multiplicity of coffee bean types, each of which defines a different degree to which the coffee beans must be roasted to attain correspondingly differing desired aromas; prior to the roasting step selecting one of the plurality of first parameters for the at least one coffee bean type; and wherein the step of discontinuing is performed when the second parameter matches the selected one of the first parameters.

71. A method of roasting coffee beans comprising the steps of establishing the degree to which the coffee beans must be roasted to attain a desired aroma by determining a first parameter which comprises at least one of a color and a degree of darkness which the coffee beans must have to yield the desired aroma; generating at least one second parameter which reflects a predetermined development of the first parameter during a roasting of the coffee beans; storing the parameters; roasting fresh coffee beans at a roasting temperature; monitoring the first parameter during roasting and discontinuing the roasting step when the coffee beans reaches the first parameter; monitoring the at least one second parameter during roasting; and adjusting the roasting step when the second parameter indicates that a deviation from the predetermined development of the first parameter occurred to thereby reestablish the predetermined development of the second parameter.

72. A method according to claim 71 wherein the second parameter comprises at least one of the roasting temperature and atmospheric pressure.

73. A method according to claim 71 wherein the step of monitoring the first parameter comprises directing a laser beam onto the fresh coffee beans during the roasting step.

74. A method according to claim 73 wherein the laser beam has a wavelength in the range of between about 600 to 800 nm.

75. A method according to claim 71 including the steps of providing a multiplicity of different coffee bean types, establishing and storing the first parameter for each coffee bean type, prior to the roasting step selecting one of the multiplicity of coffee bean types for roasting; and wherein the step of discontinuing is carried out when the coffee beans reach the first parameter for the selected coffee bean type.

76. A method according to claim 75 including the step of establishing a plurality of first parameters for at least one of the multiplicity of coffee bean types, each of which defines a different degree to which the coffee beans must be roasted to attain correspondingly differing desired aromas; prior to the roasting step selecting one of the plurality of first parameters for the at least one coffee bean type; and wherein the step of discontinuing is performed when the coffee beans reach the selected one of the first parameters.

77. A method according to claim 71 wherein the roasting step comprises flowing heated air over the fresh coffee beans, and including the steps of removing substantially all pollutants from the air downstream of the fresh coffee beans being heated, cooling the air downstream of the fresh coffee beans to substantially room temperature, and thereafter exhausting the cooled air into an enclosed room of a building.

78. A method according to claim 71 wherein the step of roasting includes flowing heated air over the fresh coffee beans, and including the steps of filtering substantially all pollutants from the heated air following the roasting step, thereafter reheating and recirculating a relatively major portion of the substantially pollutant-free air over the fresh

coffee beans to thereby continue the roasting step; and discharging a relatively minor portion of the filtered air prior to reheating and recirculating the major portion of the air.

80. (amended) A method of roasting coffee beans in a supermarket located inside a building comprising the steps of establishing the degree to which the coffee beans must be roasted to attain a desired aroma; generating a measurable first parameter which is indicative that the coffee beans have been sufficiently roasted to yield the desired aroma; storing the first parameter; roasting fresh coffee beans at a roasting temperature by flowing heated air over the fresh coffee beans; while flowing heated air over the fresh coffee beans removing substantially all pollutants from the air downstream of the fresh coffee beans being heated, including flowing the heated air through a filtration system having a catalytic converter, cooling the air downstream of the fresh coffee beans to substantially room temperature, and thereafter, while continuing to flow heated air over the fresh coffee beans, exhausting the cooled air into the supermarket; monitoring a second parameter which is compatible with the first parameter and is generated by the fresh coffee beans during roasting; and, upon detecting a match between the first and second parameters, discontinuing the roasting step.

81. (amended) A method of automatically roasting coffee beans to attain a predetermined, desired coffee aroma comprising the steps of roasting a sample of the beans inside a supermarket to a degree at which coffee made with the beans exhibits the desired aroma; sensing one of a color and a darkness of the beans when the beans have reached the degree of roasting and from the sensed color or darkness generating a first parameter which is indicative of the sensed color or darkness of the bean sample; storing the first parameter; thereafter roasting fresh beans by flowing heated air over the fresh beans; cleaning the heated air after it has passed the fresh beans so that the air is substantially pollutant-free, including flowing the heated air through a filtration system including a catalytic converter; cooling the air after the air has passed the fresh beans to about room temperature while continuing flowing the heated air over the fresh beans; discharging the cooled, pollutant-free, room temperature air into the supermarket; monitoring one of the color and darkness of the fresh beans being roasted and generating a second parameter which is indicative of a color or darkness of the fresh beans;

comparing the first and second parameters during roasting of the fresh beans; and terminating the roasting of the fresh beans when the first and second parameters match.